

THE CONTENT OF THIS DESCRIPTION IS NOT A LEARNING CONTRACT AND THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT BOUND TO IT. IT IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH AND INTENDED AS A HELPFUL GUIDE TO THE STUDENT.

TITLE: Rural and Small Church Ministry

TERM: Fall 2020-2021

PROFESSOR: Gilson Waldkoenig

CREDIT HOURS: 3

REGISTRATION: LIMITED TO: _____
AUDITORS _____

UNLIMITED X
NO AUDITORS X

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Seventy-one per cent (71%) of all congregations in the United States have fewer than 100 people in average weekly attendance (78% in PCUSA) Forty-four per cent (44%) of all congregations are in rural or small town settings (48% in PCUSA). Explore your reaction to social change, conflict, community patterns, and opportunities for mission in rural places and small churches, including Appalachia and other regions. While readings, presentations and discussions frame the course, there are options for ethnographic field research and development of mission plans in a setting you choose.

CLASS OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify social patterns that inform faith, ministry and mission in rural places, including especially social change and conflict
2. Read places ethnographically—by culture, context, process and resources--becoming attentive to local and broader traditions of belief and practice
3. Recognize and analyze rural poverty, land dispossession and power disparities through rural history and rural sociology
4. Enhance one's awareness of call shaped by place in both patterned and surprising ways, assess one's development in ministry competencies, and envision mission in relationship to social and ecological context

PREREQUISITES: None

READING ASSIGNMENTS/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Books:

- Margaret Craven, *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Ltd, 2005), ISBN: 978-1550413397, \$12.95
- Jeanne Hoeft, et al, *Practicing Care in Rural Congregations & Communities* (Fortress, 2013), ISBN: 978-0800699543, \$16.07
- Ronald Bonner, *No Bigotry Allowed: Losing the Spirit of Fear*, 2nd ed. (Author, 2015) ISBN 978-1516888931 \$11.95
- Brad Roth, *God's Country: Faith, Hope and the Future of the Rural Church* (Herald, 2017), ISBN: 978-1513801612, \$16.99
- Norman Wirzba & Fred Bahnson, *Making Peace with the Land: God's Call to Reconcile with Creation*. (IVP 2012), ISBN: 978-0830834570, \$13.66
- Robert Wuthnow, *The Left Behind: Decline & Rage in Rural America* (Princeton, 2018), ISBN: 978-0691177663, \$18.85

Articles/Chapters

- "Studying Congregations" website <https://studyingcongregations.org>
- Wendell Berry, "The Work of Local Culture" from *What Are People For?* (North Point, 1990) <https://thecontraryfarmer.wordpress.com/2011/06/10/wendell-berry-the-work-of-local-culture/>
- "American Religion Data Archive" www.thearda.com

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:

Field Observations – 60% (Details to be outlined in syllabus)
participation– 8%
quizzes on readings – 2% each x 8 = 16%
Take-homes (open book) -- 2% each x 8 =16%

ATTENDANCE: Required.